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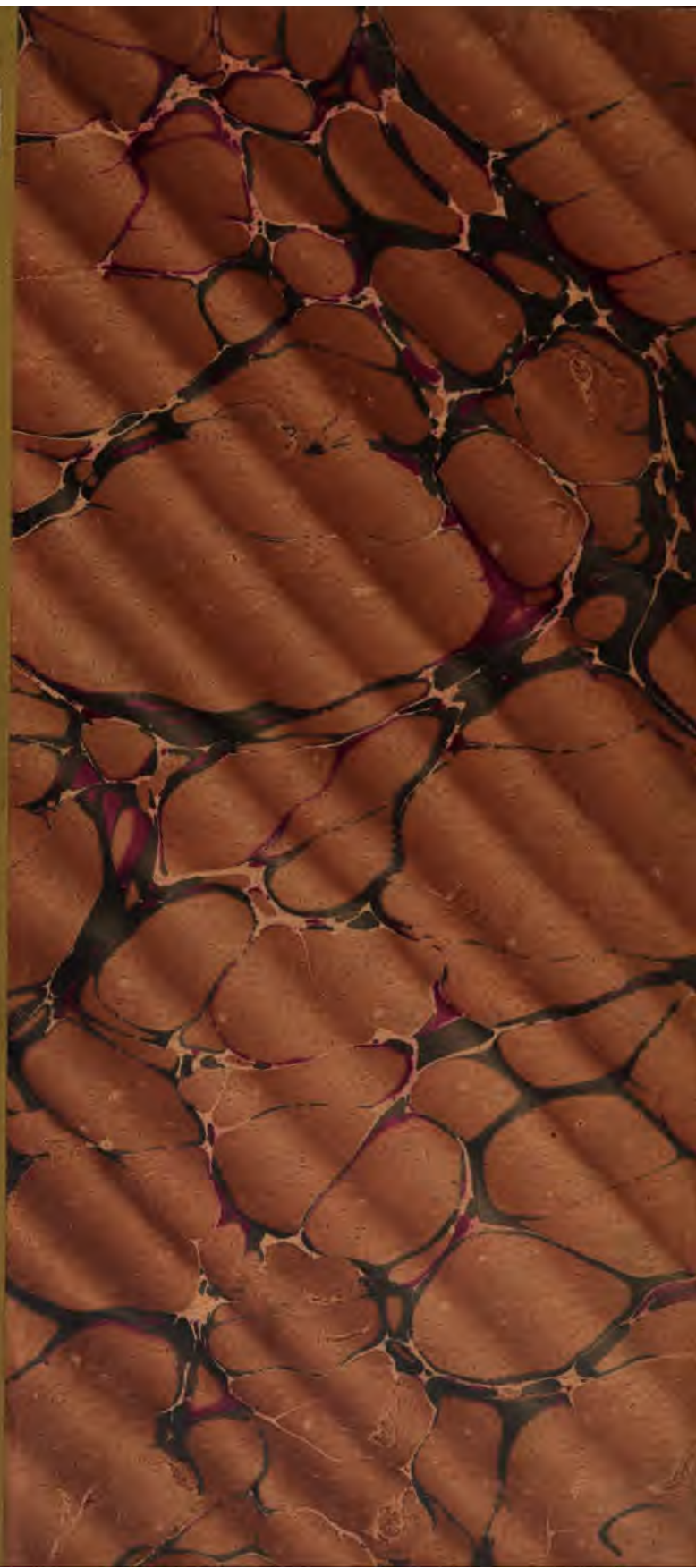
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Epistle to Yearly Meeting of Friends of
Pennsylvania . 1834

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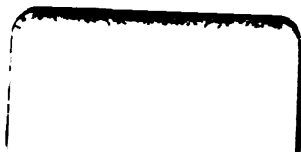


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Rachel A. Simmons

EPISTLE

TO THE MEMBERS

OF THE

YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS,

OF

PENNSYLVANIA, NEW-JERSEY, DELAWARE,

AND THE

EASTERN PARTS OF MARYLAND.

Philadelphia:
PRINTED BY JOSEPH RAKESTRAW.
1834.

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July 13, 1937.

EPISTLE TO THE MEMBERS
OF THE
YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS,
OF
PENNSYLVANIA, NEW-JERSEY, DELAWARE, AND THE EASTERN PARTS
OF MARYLAND.

DEAR FRIENDS,

The Yearly Meeting having been brought under religious exercise, for the preservation of its members out of the commotions which prevail in the world, after communicating counsel on the subject to the subordinate meetings, recommended it also to this meeting, that as way opened, further endeavours might be used to encourage and strengthen one another, in a close adherence to our peaceable principles and practice. Being met, as usual, to give attention to those affairs, which by the constitution of this meeting are devolved upon it, the subject was brought into view, and under a consideration of the various snares which are continually spread to entangle the members of the church, we have felt a concern to address you at the present time.

Our religious society having always acknowledged the benefits of civil government, we have not the least intention of impairing or lessening its salutary obligations, nor of debarring our members from the orderly and innocent exercise of the privileges and immunities to which, as citizens, they have an undoubted right. And knowing that it is incumbent on us, in common with others, to bear our part of the public burdens, we have ever been willing to render such services for the support of legal authority, as may not be repugnant to our Christian principles: but it is our fervent desire to inculcate the necessity of continual watchfulness unto prayer, that no part of our conduct, or the ardour and bent of our spirits, may manifest that we do not sufficiently regard the weight and importance of our testimony to the dominion of the Messiah, the Prince of peace; whose power being over all, his real subjects look with hope and confidence

to Him, who alone, in the midst of the strife and confusion which may be in the kingdoms and governments of this world, can preserve in a calm reliance upon his almighty arm, and a living faith in his protecting Providence.

Although it is not our business or inclination to engage in the discussion of subjects which peculiarly belong to the management of the affairs of government, yet knowing that much excitement does at this time agitate the public mind, we cannot but feel very desirous that the members of our religious society may be preserved upon the only sure foundation, which has been the hope and stay of the righteous in every generation—that they may be guarded against encouraging the unstable, deceitful spirit of party, by joining with political devices, or associations, however speciously disguised.

The peaceable exercise of the right of suffrage, Friends have always left to the private judgment of the members; but it is repugnant to our religious profession to be concerned in any measures which violate the order and peace of civil society, under the pretext of redressing grievances, or maintaining what are considered inalienable rights. As we cannot join in any such measures, we believe it is safest for our members to refrain from political associations, which will lead them into connexion with those, whose sentiments and habits are prejudicial to a religious life, and may eventuate in acts diametrically opposed to the peaceable nature of Christ's kingdom and of our testimony thereto.

The invariable tendency of political pursuits, is to engross the attention of those who devote their time to them, frequently drawing them to taverns, so that they often become disqualified for the necessary duties of life, suffer great loss in their temporal business, and above all, in a proper concern for the salvation of their immortal souls. The instability and faithlessness very observable in political combinations, frequently involve the parties in disappointment and chagrin; destroying the peace and serenity which appertain to the Christian life, and unfitting the mind for the enjoyment of divine approbation.

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Rachel R. Simmons

this, this gathers out of all bustlings and noises, and parties and tumults, and leads you to exalt the standard of truth and righteousness, in an innocent conversation, to see who will flow unto that. And this shall be a refuge for many of the weary, tossed and afflicted ones in those days, and a shelter for many whose day is not over."

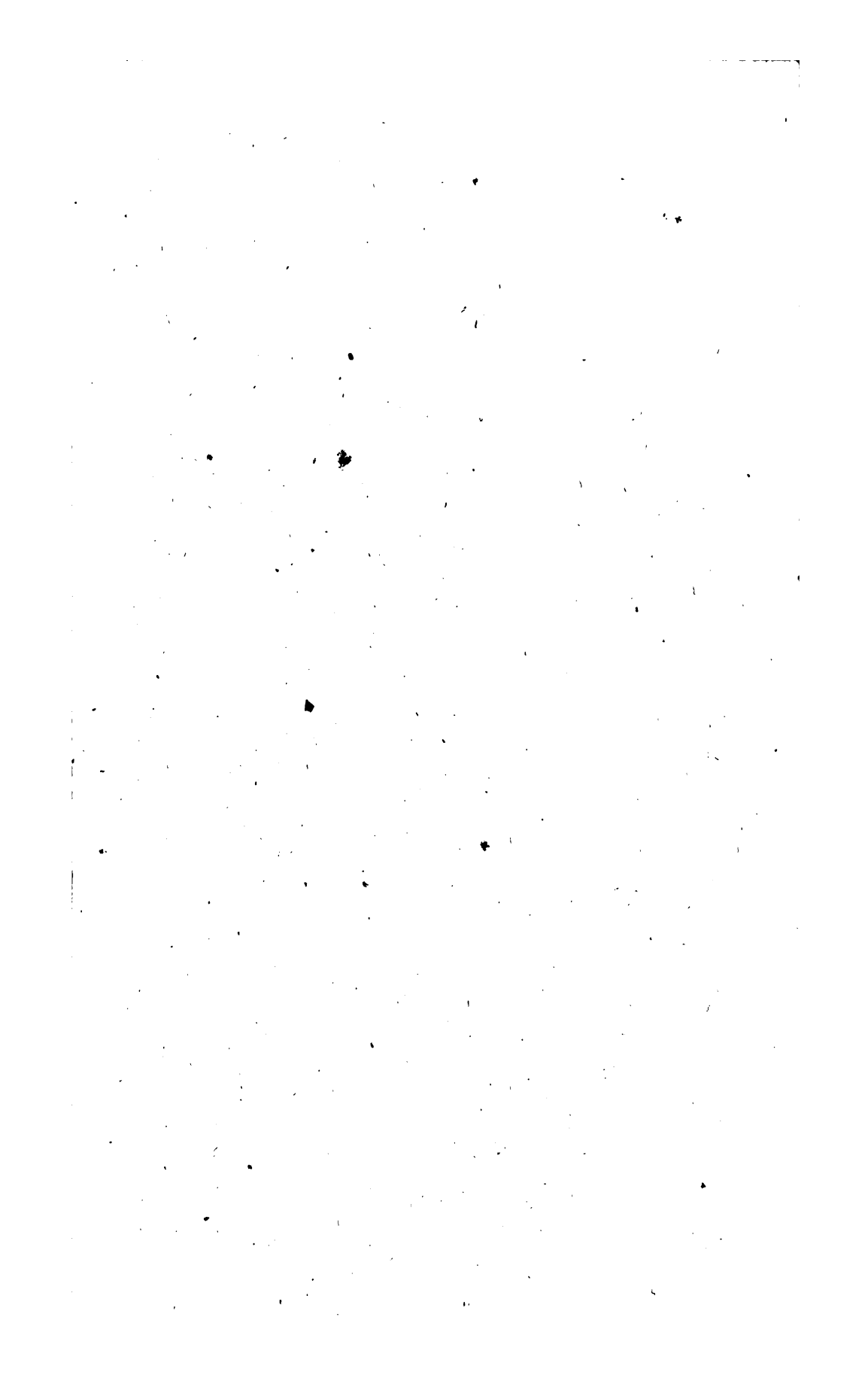
Having thus brought into view the exercise with which we have been impressed, and the counsel which our early Friends published on similar occasions, it is our affectionate desire, that those in membership with us may regard the concern with that seriousness and weight which its importance claims;—that as the Truth is unchangeable, we may be engaged to bear a harmonious testimony to its power and efficacy; walking by the same rule, and minding the same thing. We should then experience the fear of the Lord, as a fountain of life, to preserve us from the various alluring objects, which under the promise of emolument to ourselves, or of eminence in civil society, are pressingly soliciting our acceptance, and by which the soul may be defiled.

When capable of duly estimating the awful and responsible station of a member of the body of Christ, we are made sensible of the liability to defilement, by uniting with any thing that is impure; and assuredly know, that that which stands not in the counsel of God, must ever be repugnant to the kingdom of his dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh! how very important are the obligations resting upon a holy profession! What fear, what circumspection and caution should always attend those who take upon them his holy name—that sincerely and steadily seeking to honour him in their humble consistent walking, they might be instrumental to the spreading of his reign upon the earth, who is King of kings and Lord of lords.

With the salutation of unfeigned love, we are your friends and brethren.

*Signed in and on behalf of our Meeting for Sufferings,
held in Philadelphia, the 15th of 8th month, 1834.*

JONATHAN EVANS, Clerk.







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